Of Becomings and Reckonings

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/31478225.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Beau Graham - Freeform, Abigail Hobbs
Additional Tags:	Fluff, Domestic Fluff, Everything is Beautiful and Nothing Hurts, Will Graham Loves Hannibal Lecter, Hannibal Lecter Loves Will Graham, Will Graham and Hannibal Lecter in Love, Established Relationship, Invasion of Privacy, This is Will Graham's Becoming, Will wants his reckoning, Will Gets His Reckoning, Lobbying as a family activity
Language:	English
Series:	Part 3 of The Beau Effect
Collections:	How Many Is Too Many?
Stats:	Published: 2021-05-23 Words: 2,565 Chapters: 1/1

Of Becomings and Reckonings

by barcharonte

Summary

Beau adopts life-long learning as a principle. Will has enough of having their privacy breached. Hannibal saves the day. And Abigail... Abigail has many ambitions. One of them is keeping her only ear intact.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

No son of mine would let that monstrosity into his home willingly.

Will stared at the text, unable to make sense of it. He could, however, appreciate that Beau was getting better at typing with correct grammar. He picked up the phone to call him.

"Dad, hi," he said. "Uhm, how are you?"

"Disappointed's how I am," came the gruff reply. Will could hear the clanking of the dishes in the background. It was mid-afternoon in Paris, so he figured that Beau must be dealing with his breakfast at the moment. "What on Lord's green earth is that thing, boy?"

"What thing?" Will asked. He had a bad feeling about this.

"That fella with the swords, in the hallway!" Beau was just shy of bellowing. "What is that?"

"That's a samurai armour," Will replied. He was careful not to roll his eyes in case Hannibal looked over at him from where he was chopping up onions in the kitchen. It was the curse of an open kitchen that oversaw the living room. Will tried to appear unsuspecting as he turned his back to Hannibal just in case, and pretended to look out the window at the backyard. "It was going to go into the bedroom. We negotiated."

"Will," Beau started, but paused as if he changed his mind. He was whispering when he started again, as if he felt Hannibal could hear him. "You know you can always come back, right? We can even get you a new bed here, you wouldn't have to sleep on that old couch."

Will chuckled. "Thank you, dad. But no. I know it seems quite… intimidating at first glance, but Hannibal went to great lengths to have it shipped from his house in Baltimore," he let himself do the eye-roll now, and tried to sound convincing as he added, "and we like it now."

And the fact of the matter was that Will *did* have an affinity for that thing now. At first glance, he had said that he had enough nightmare fuel to last him a lifetime, and that he did not need to spook himself whenever he saw it at night and thought someone had broken into their home. He had then told Hannibal in no uncertain terms that if it came into this house, Will would move out. *And I'll take that cloud sofa with me,* he had said. *Abigail, too. Maybe. The choice is yours.* Hannibal had first told him he was being childish and should try to see reason for a second. When that very much did not work, he had offered to display it somewhere Will would be unlikely to see from his usual hangout spots. To sweeten the deal, he had also agreed to allow Will's canine memorabilia collection to be scattered throughout the house. Will was especially fond of the tiny bobbing head ornament of a French Bulldog. It was placed lovingly on top of the toilet tank, and made him smile every time he went there.

"I don't know why I even try," Beau was saying now. "Maybe the two of you deserve each other."

"Maybe," Will agreed. "So, what are you up to these days?"

"While you're nesting like a mother hen, you mean?" Beau said. It wasn't unexpected of Beau nowadays to tease him for wanting to spend most of his time in the house. Will

gracefully took the ribbing, but did not let it push him out of the comfort zone he found here. "I signed up for a woodworking course, thank you very much!"

"What?" Will did a double take. "What do you mean? *You*?"

"You think your old man is done for, boy?" Beau said, but he was laughing. "Abby's been teaching me to use 'the internet,'" he explained, the term uttered in an unreasonably funny manner that should not have a place in this day and age. "I found this workshop two towns over. I thought I'd pass it off because my hunk of junk can barely hold her own weight now, but then I thought hey, Willy left his car behind! Thanks for that, by the way. So I called and signed me up. It starts on Monday next."

"That's- great, I guess," Will said. He was so used to his father's only socialization being work and the occasional visit to the local pub that it was hard to imagine him in a workshop, surrounded by people, listening to *instructions*. "But, dad. Woodworking?"

"You have yourself to thank for that," Beau retorted. "I liked the carvings on that new desk of yours. You know, the one in the study." The tone turned sly. "Such a shame the old one broke. Looked antique. Must have been expensive. Treat this one better, kiddo."

Will held his breath in mortification, his wide eyes looking down the street without seeing anything. This was Abigail's doing. Did she have to relay every single shameful detail to his dad? And to think he had just been considering doing something nice for her for teaching Beau his way around 21st century technology.

"Will?"

"It was an old desk," he said flatly. "One leg was shorter than the rest. Had termites too."

"Sure, son. I'll buy that," Beau said, the click of the kettle indicating he was making himself coffee. Will hoped he'd burn his tongue, but just slightly.

"Isn't there *any* way I can convince you to stop this thing with Abigail and the pictures?" He asked, and would forever deny that he was whining. "Please. This is embarrassing. I don't feel comfortable sharing a home with a… A *terrorist spy*."

"Oh, Will," his father teased. "It's not just pictures anymore. We've added videos into the mix too."

"God, oh god, no," Will protested, and was startled when arms wrapped around his middle. Hannibal was so quiet when he wanted to be. The shaggy carpet and socked feet did not help either. Upon a silent nudge, Will bent his head a bit to make room on his shoulder for Hannibal's chin, the phone now between their ears. He was listening in on the conversation, and wasn't that just perfect?

"God, oh god, yes," came the mocking reply. "I have this lovely footage of the two of you slow dancing. Without music. Weirdos."

“She wasn’t even in the room!” Will said, unable to keep his voice down. “Is she using hidden cameras now? Dad!”

“I’m sworn to secrecy,” Beau uttered the most oft-repeated words in recent times, and they were able to turn Will’s dreams into nightmares with ease. “But don’t be so hard on her, Will,” he continued, softer now. “You’ve kept to yourself for decades. I hardly knew what you did for most of your life. And don’t I deserve to see my boy happy?” That last bit was so sincere and manipulative in the same breath that Will suspected him and Abigail of coming up with the phrase beforehand, for this exact scenario.

Will gritted his teeth, and ignored Hannibal’s amused huff when he said, “Fine. Fine, but you have to tell me what she gets in return for this.”

“Oh, it’s nothing!” Beau said, but it did nothing to calm Will. Hannibal began rubbing his abdomen to release some tension from the clenched muscles there. “I just pass on the stuff I find from around the house. Just the other day I found some of your childhood drawings. Quite the Picasso you were. Get her to show them to you. My favourite is the one where you were holding hands with me and a giant fish. ‘Course I only know it was a fish because I had the foresight to write it on.”

“I hate you. All of you,” Will said, and when he heard Beau take a sip from his coffee with a self-satisfied hum, he retracted his previous wish for a slight burn and hoped for a *moderate* one instead. That’d teach him. “I won’t forget this. I will remember, and there will be a reckoning.”

“I have your baby teeth in a box, boy. Do your worst.”

“I’m going now,” Will warned, because no matter how angry he was, he would not dream of hanging up on Beau. “Bye, dad,” he said and ended the call, cutting the boisterous laughter in half.

Hannibal rubbed his nose on his neck, and held him tighter. “What do you have in mind, dear Will?” Will looked up at the ceiling and tried to calm down.

“It can’t go on this way. Taking her phone would be barbaric, but…”

“But?”

“But maybe...” Will trailed off, the idea forming itself. “What if she had her own place? Somewhere close to campus? She *does* complain about the commute.”

“Are you suggesting we move our dear Abigail out of our home?” Hannibal purred. Yes, purred, because he loved it when Will let himself be ruthless and spiteful.

“She’s legally an adult now. I think she’d like her own space. You know, so she can have the privacy she *doesn’t let us have*?”

“Do you mean somewhere like a studio apartment? With high ceilings and a pop-up sun roof perhaps, to get the best light for painting?” Hannibal pressed their cheeks together.

“Somewhere conveniently within walking distance to the campus? Could that possibly be what you mean?”

Will let himself sink into the embrace now. “You already found a place, didn’t you?”

“I have the realtor’s business card. He’s awaiting an offer,” Hannibal said, his smirk pushing into Will’s cheek.

“It would be rude to keep him waiting, then,” Will said, but heaved a deep sigh the next moment. “You know, I wouldn’t be surprised if this had been an elaborate plan on her part to get us to do just this. In fact, I’m almost a hundred percent sure she planned this.”

“Be that as it may, my love,” Hannibal said, turning Will so that he could look into his eyes. “What difference would it make when everyone gets what they want in the end?”

“That’s a good point,” Will said. “I will still put stinging nettle in her slippers.”

“Such cruelty,” Hannibal was ecstatic now.

“And accidently drop her favourite perfume,” Will added, enjoying the glint in Hannibal’s eyes. “I did tell her not to leave it so close to the edge of the counter.”

“And you can be quite clumsy at times.”

“That’s right,” Will smiled, going along with the false narrative. “Like a bull in a china shop.” He put his head on Hannibal’s shoulder and held him back. “You’re a horrible influence, Doctor Lecter. You bring out the worst in me.”

Hannibal tutted. “Who is to say what is the worst or the best of someone? No, darling. What I do is witness and gladly support your becoming.”

“My becoming a mean bugger, you mean?”

“If that is the truest reflection of who you are, then yes,” Hannibal said, squeezing him once before releasing him. “I’ll put the dinner into the oven now. This particular recipe requires a long roasting period in steady heat. The meat will fall off the bone by the time it’s done.”

“What was it called, again?” Will mindlessly followed Hannibal into the kitchen. It was second nature now to gravitate towards the kitchen and perch on the stools by the island to watch Hannibal work his magic.

“Lamb tandoori,” Hannibal explained. “Or as close to it as we can get at the moment. I’d need a furnace built into hardened soil to have the most authentic results, but we’ll have to make do for now.”

“‘For now,’” Will repeated, and promptly ignored Hannibal’s dry look. “And how do you feel, about the meat actually being lamb this time?”

“I’m impartial,” Hannibal said, his swift hands spreading the seasoning he prepared over the clean cuts of meat with precision. “It was a pleasant surprise to find such quality products in

the local butcher. I can't complain."

"But you can," Will poked a bit. "She was rude to you when you asked her questions about the meat."

"Was she?" Affecting ignorance, Hannibal turned to place the tray inside the pre-heated oven. Closing the lid with flourish, he began to clean up what little clutter he had left on the counter. "I hadn't noticed."

"You took her card," Will said, deadpan. "I saw you put it in the rolodex. You can't pick and choose which rude to eat according to the quality of the product they sell, Hannibal. That would be very hypocritical of you."

Hannibal stopped his motions to scan Will's expression. "You really didn't like her, did you?"

"She sneered at us whenever we touched," Will said, eyes narrowing at the memory.

"The ultimate sin," Hannibal turned back to wiping the marble, using only plain soap and warm water to protect the material. "That seals her fate, then."

"Don't do it on my account," Will conceded. "I can wait until the quality drops."

"Wouldn't that be hypocritical, love?" Hannibal asked back with a slight smirk.

"Ah, what the hell," Will got up. "This is my becoming, isn't it? Might as well add that to the list." He opened the drawer that held one part of the spices and herbs Hannibal hoarded and found the small jar that held the stinging nettle. Hannibal occasionally added it to tea, and sometimes used it to make pesto and soup. Will had a decidedly less nurturing purpose in mind for them. "Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a reckoning to get to."

"If I might make a suggestion," Hannibal called to him before he could slip from the kitchen. "I would use a glove while handling that. I would also go for the sock drawer instead of the slippers. It would be a more… Lasting touch."

Will thought only one thing as he walked back to Hannibal, and it was: *This man*… on a loop. He grabbed Hannibal by the nape and pressed a hard, close-mouthed kiss on his lips. He then grabbed a plastic glove from the box on the island, and left before he could distract himself any further.

Later, once he was done with the socks, he went to the bathroom, lifted the dainty perfume bottle above his head and dropped it. The thing shattered satisfactorily and more loudly than he predicted on the dark bathroom tiles.

And if he hastily disposed of the glove and rushed to the living room upon hearing Hannibal's laughter, well. It was as good as a siren's call, and really, he couldn't be blamed for it.

*

"I enjoyed doing business with you, Doctor Lecter."

“Likewise. But I want the video and his drawings as well. Don’t think I appreciate you holding them back from me.”

“I was going to send it all, I swear.”

“We will have to work on your poker face, Abigail. Also, how did you get the video, if I may ask?”

“I set the phone with the camera on before I went to bed.”

“What if you had caught a… much less platonic encounter?”

“So? It’s not as if I don’t hear you guys loud and clear all the time.”

“Are you suggesting that your remaining ear is giving you trouble, dear Abigail?”

“…Say what. I’ll send you everything me and Pops get between us from now on. An open check, how’s that?”

“I’d say you’re getting smarter in your negotiations. Atta girl.”

End Notes

For those who are interested: Hannibal gave Abigail some itch relief cream... Eventually. He first made sure to record a few clips of her furiously scratching her feet. Will thanked him profusely and in a most welcome manner for them.

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